




# Native Americans and the Medal of Honor



*“Gallantry, personal heroism and extraordinary valor...”*



*Picture in your mind a Native American warrior. What do you see? Is it a fierce Apache brave on horseback with war paint on his face? Perhaps a proud Cherokee Chief, adorned in a ceremonial feathered headdress, performing a war dance? These are certainly the images of Native Americans that Hollywood has given us over the years, and many of us have permitted antiquated images from the silver screen to dominate our views of the Native American warrior.*

*Consider these images instead: a battle-weary Marine Private First Class valiantly hoisting the American flag at Iwo Jima; an Army sergeant crawling up a hill in Italy, under heavy enemy fire, single-handedly taking out two enemy machine-gun nests and capturing three prisoners. A Navy Commander guiding his crippled ship between the Japanese fleet and United States carriers, fighting to the end and saving the day. Those are the modern Native American warriors; and while the images of the past may not be forgotten, the facts of the present cannot be ignored.*

*This slide show has ten of the 27 Native Americans who received the Medal Of Honor and one slide on the Native American Code Talkers.*



**Army  
Medal of Honor**



**Navy and Marine  
Corps' Medal of Honor**



**Air Force  
Medal of Honor**



Humankind has not woven the web of life.

We are but one thread within it.

Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

All things are bound together,

All things connect.

*Seattle, Squamish Chief*

*1786-1866*

# Indian Campaigns

ALCHESAY (*Apache*)

Rank and organization:

Sergeant, Indian Scouts. Place

and date: Winter of 1872-73.

Entered service at: Camp Verde,

Ariz. Born: 1853, Arizona

Territory. Date of issue: 12

April 1875. Citation: Gallant

conduct during campaigns and  
engagements with Apaches.





# World War II

BARFOOT, VAN T. (*Choctaw*)

Rank and organization: Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army, 157th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Carano, Italy, 23 May 1944. Entered service at: Carthage, Miss. Birth: Edinburg, Miss. G.O. No.: 79, 4 October 1944. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 23 May 1944, near Carano, Italy. With his platoon heavily engaged during an assault against forces well entrenched on commanding ground, 2d Lt. Barfoot (then Tech. Sgt.) moved off alone upon the enemy left flank. He crawled to the proximity of 1 machine-gun nest and made a direct hit on it with a hand grenade, killing 2 and wounding 3 Germans. He continued along the German defense line to another machine-gun emplacement, and with his tommygun killed 2 and captured 3 soldiers. Members of another enemy machine-gun crew then abandoned their position and gave themselves up to Sgt. Barfoot. Leaving the prisoners for his support squad to pick up, he proceeded to mop up positions in the immediate area, capturing more prisoners and bringing his total count to 17.



Later that day, after he had reorganized his men and consolidated the newly captured ground, the enemy launched a fierce armored counterattack directly at his platoon positions. Securing a bazooka, Sgt. Barfoot took up an exposed position directly in front of 3 advancing Mark VI tanks. From a distance of 75 yards his first shot destroyed the track of the leading tank, effectively disabling it, while the other 2 changed direction toward the flank. As the crew of the disabled tank dismounted, Sgt. Barfoot killed 3 of them with his tommygun. He continued onward into enemy terrain and destroyed a recently abandoned German fieldpiece with a demolition charge placed in the breach. While returning to his platoon position, Sgt. Barfoot, though greatly fatigued by his Herculean efforts, assisted 2 of his seriously wounded men 1,700 yards to a position of safety. Sgt. Barfoot's extraordinary heroism, demonstration of magnificent valor, and aggressive determination in the face of pointblank fire are a perpetual inspiration to his fellow soldiers

# World War II

CHILDERS, "Chief" ERNEST (*Cherokee*)

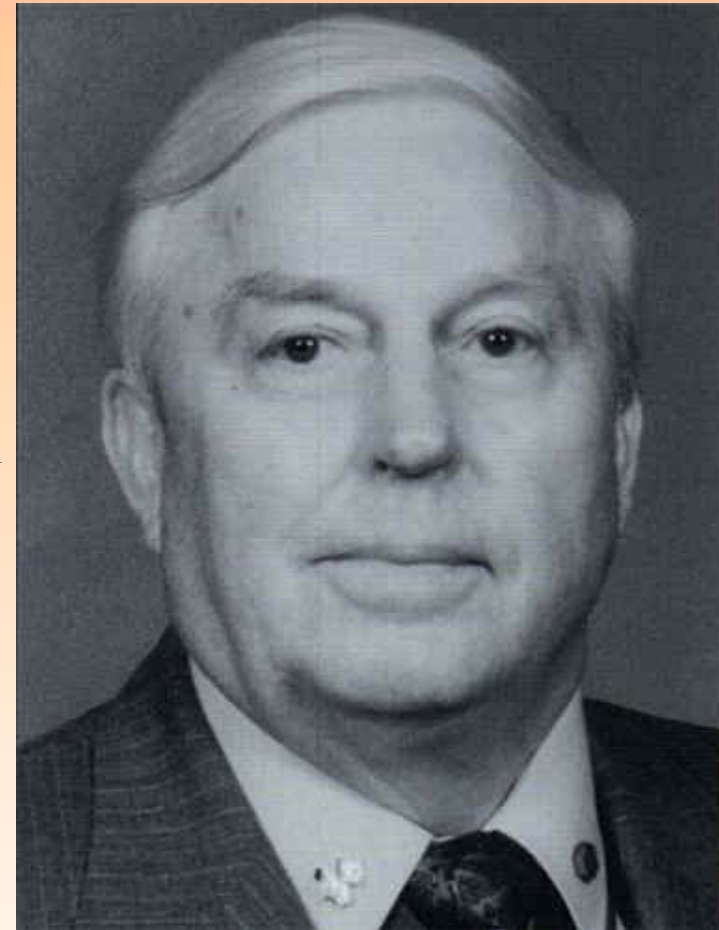
Rank and organization: Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army, 45th Infantry Division. Place and date: At Oliveto, Italy, 22 September 1943. Entered service at: Tulsa, Okla. Birth: Broken Arrow, Okla. G.O. No.: 30, 8 April 1944. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action on 22 September 1943, at Oliveto, Italy. Although 2d Lt. Childers previously had just suffered a fractured instep he, with 8 enlisted men, advanced up a hill toward enemy machinegun nests. The group advanced to a rock wall overlooking a cornfield and 2d Lt. Childers ordered a base of fire laid across the field so that he could advance. When he was fired upon by 2 enemy snipers from a nearby house he killed both of them. He moved behind the machinegun nests and killed all occupants of the nearer one. He continued toward the second one and threw rocks into it. When the 2 occupants of the nest raised up, he shot 1. The other was killed by 1 of the 8 enlisted men. 2d Lt. Childers continued his advance toward a house farther up the hill, and single-handed, captured an enemy mortar observer. The exceptional leadership, initiative, calmness under fire, and conspicuous gallantry displayed by 2d Lt. Childers were an inspiration to his men.



# World War II

CREWS, JOHN R. (*Choctaw*)

Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company F, 253d Infantry, 63d Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Lobenbacherhof, Germany, 8 April 1945. Entered service at: Bowlegs, Okla. Birth: Golden, Okla. Citation: He displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 8 April 1945 near Lobenbacherhof, Germany. As his company was advancing toward the village under heavy fire, an enemy machinegun and automatic rifle with rifle support opened upon it from a hill on the right flank. Seeing that his platoon leader had been wounded by their fire, S/Sgt. Crews, acting on his own initiative, rushed the strongpoint with 2 men of his platoon. Despite the fact that 1 of these men was killed and the other was badly wounded, he continued his advance up the hill in the face of terrific enemy fire. Storming the well-dug-in position single-handedly, he killed 2 of the crew of the machinegun at pointblank range with his M 1 rifle and wrested the gun from the hands of the German whom he had already wounded. He then with his rifle charged the strongly emplaced automatic rifle. Although badly wounded in the thigh by crossfire from the remaining enemy, he kept on and silenced the entire position with his accurate and deadly rifle fire. His actions so unnerved the remaining enemy soldiers that 7 of them surrendered and the others fled. His heroism caused the enemy to concentrate on him and permitted the company to move forward into the village.





# World War II

Commander Evans was the Commanding Officer of the USS JOHNSTON (DD-557), a Fletcher class destroyer which fought Japanese forces in the battle off Samar on October 25, 1944. Evans was a true warrior who, upon taking command of the newly commissioned vessel on October 27, 1943, told his crew, **“This is going to be a fighting ship. I intend to go in harm’s way, and anyone who doesn’t want to go along had better get off right now.”**

EVANS, "Chief" ERNEST EDWIN (*Cherokee*)

Rank and organization: Commander, **U.S. Navy**. Born: 13 August 1908, Pawnee, Okla. Accredited to: Oklahoma. Other Navy awards: Navy Cross, Bronze Star Medal. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as commanding officer of the U.S.S. Johnston in action against major units of the enemy Japanese fleet during the battle off Samar on 25 October 1944. The first to lay a smokescreen and to open fire as an enemy task force, vastly superior in number, firepower and armor, rapidly approached. Comdr. Evans gallantly diverted the powerful blasts of hostile guns from the lightly armed and armored carriers under his protection, launching the first torpedo attack when the Johnston came under straddling Japanese shellfire.



Undaunted by damage sustained under the terrific volume of fire, he unhesitatingly joined others of his group to provide fire support during subsequent torpedo attacks against the Japanese and, outshooting and outmaneuvering the enemy as he consistently interposed his vessel between the hostile fleet units and our carriers despite the crippling loss of engine power and communications with steering aft, shifted command to the fantail, shouted steering orders through an open hatch to men turning the rudder by hand and battled furiously until the Johnston, burning and shuddering from a mortal blow, lay dead in the water after 3 hours of fierce combat. Seriously wounded early in the engagement, Comdr. Evans, by his indomitable courage and brilliant professional skill, aided materially in turning back the enemy during a critical phase of the action. His valiant fighting spirit throughout this historic battle will venture as an inspiration to all who served with him.

# World War II

MONTGOMERY, JACK C. (*Cherokee*)

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, 45th Infantry Division. Place and date: Near, Padiglione, Italy, 22 February 1944. Entered service at: Sallisaw, Okla. Birth: Long, Okla. G.O. No.: 5, 15 January 1945. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 22 February 1944, near Padiglione, Italy. Two hours before daybreak a strong force of enemy infantry established themselves in 3 echelons at 50 yards, 100 yards, and 300 yards, respectively, in front of the rifle platoons commanded by 1st Lt. Montgomery. The closest position, consisting of 4 machine guns and 1 mortar, threatened the immediate security of the platoon position. Seizing an M1 rifle and several hand grenades, 1st Lt. Montgomery crawled up a ditch to within hand grenade range of the enemy. Then climbing boldly onto a little mound, he fired his rifle and threw his grenades so accurately that he killed 8 of the enemy and captured the remaining 4. Returning to his platoon, he called for artillery fire on a house, in and around which he suspected that the majority of the enemy had entrenched themselves.



Arming himself with a carbine, he proceeded along the shallow ditch, as withering fire from the riflemen and machine gunners in the second position was concentrated on him. He attacked this position with such fury that 7 of the enemy surrendered to him, and both machine guns were silenced. Three German dead were found in the vicinity later that morning. 1st Lt. Montgomery continued boldly toward the house, 300 yards from his platoon position. It was now daylight, and the enemy observation was excellent across the flat open terrain which led to 1st Lt. Montgomery's objective. When the artillery barrage had lifted, 1st Lt. Montgomery ran fearlessly toward the strongly defended position. As the enemy started streaming out of the house, 1st Lt. Montgomery, unafraid of treacherous snipers, exposed himself daringly to assemble the surrendering enemy and send them to the rear. His fearless, aggressive, and intrepid actions that morning, accounted for a total of 11 enemy dead, 32 prisoners, and an unknown number of wounded. That night, while aiding an adjacent unit to repulse a counterattack, he was struck by mortar fragments and seriously wounded. The selflessness and courage exhibited by 1st Lt. Montgomery in alone attacking 3 strong enemy positions inspired his men to a degree beyond estimation.

# Korean War

HARVEY, RAYMOND (*Chicksaw*)

Rank and organization: Captain, U.S. Army, Company C, 17th Infantry Regiment. Place and date: Vicinity of Taemi-Dong, Korea, 9 March 1951. Entered service at: Pasadena, Calif. Born: 1 March 1920 Ford City, Pa. G.O. No.: 67, 2 August 1951. Citation: Capt. Harvey Company C, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action. When his company was pinned down by a barrage of automatic weapons fire from numerous well-entrenched emplacements, imperiling accomplishment of its mission, Capt. Harvey braved a hail of fire and exploding grenades to advance to the first enemy machinegun nest, killing its crew with grenades. Rushing to the edge of the next emplacement, he killed its crew with carbine fire. He then moved the 1st Platoon forward until it was again halted by a curtain of automatic fire from wellfortified hostile positions. Disregarding the hail of fire, he personally charged and neutralized a third emplacement. Miraculously escaping death from intense crossfire, Capt. Harvey continued to lead the assault. Spotting an enemy pillbox well camouflaged by logs, he moved close enough to sweep the emplacement with carbine fire and throw grenades through the openings, annihilating its 5 occupants. Though wounded he then turned to order the company forward, and, suffering agonizing pain, he continued to direct the reduction of the remaining hostile positions, refusing evacuation until assured that the mission would be accomplished. Capt. Harvey's valorous and intrepid actions served as an inspiration to his company, reflecting the utmost glory upon himself and upholding the heroic traditions of the military service.

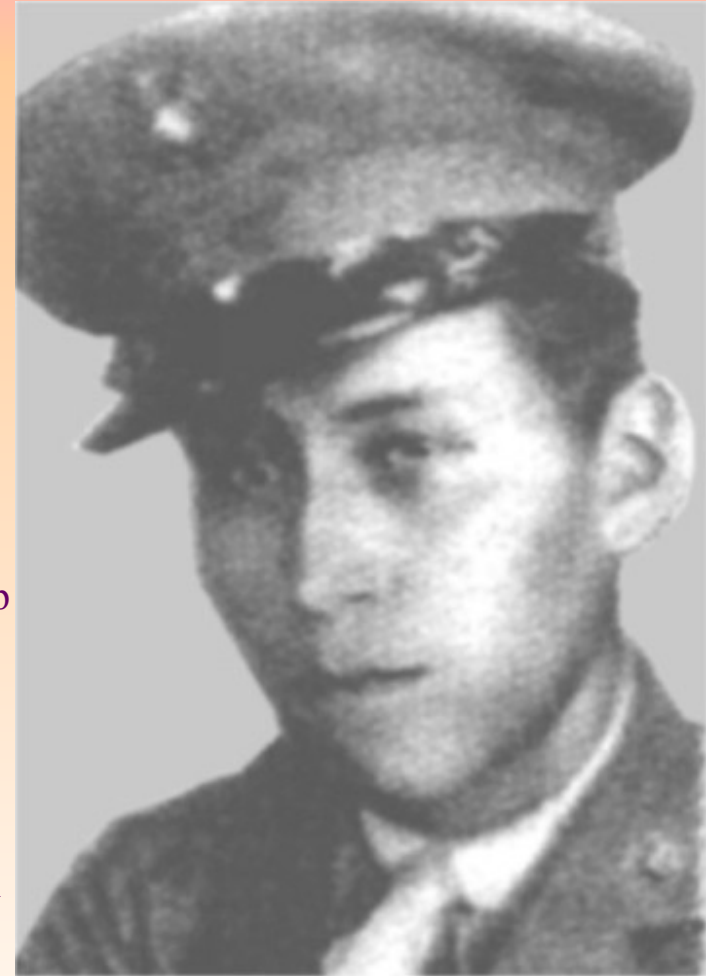




# Korean War

RED CLOUD, MITCHELL, JR. (*Winnebago*)

Rank and organization: Corporal, U S. Army, Company E, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Chonghyon, Korea, 5 November 1950. Entered service at: Merrilan Wis. Born: 2 July 1924, Hatfield, Wis. G.O. No.: 26, 25 April 1951. Citation: Cpl. Red Cloud, Company E, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. From his position on the point of a ridge immediately in front of the company command post he was the first to detect the approach of the Chinese Communist forces and give the alarm as the enemy charged from a brush-covered area less than 100 feet from him. Springing up he delivered devastating pointblank automatic rifle fire into the advancing enemy. His accurate and intense fire checked this assault and gained time for the company to consolidate its defense. With utter fearlessness he maintained his firing position until severely wounded by enemy fire. Refusing assistance he pulled himself to his feet and wrapping his arm around a tree continued his deadly fire again, until he was fatally wounded. This heroic act stopped the enemy from overrunning his company's position and gained time for reorganization and evacuation of the wounded. Cpl. Red Cloud's dauntless courage and gallant self-sacrifice reflects the highest credit upon himself and upholds the esteemed traditions of the U.S. Army.

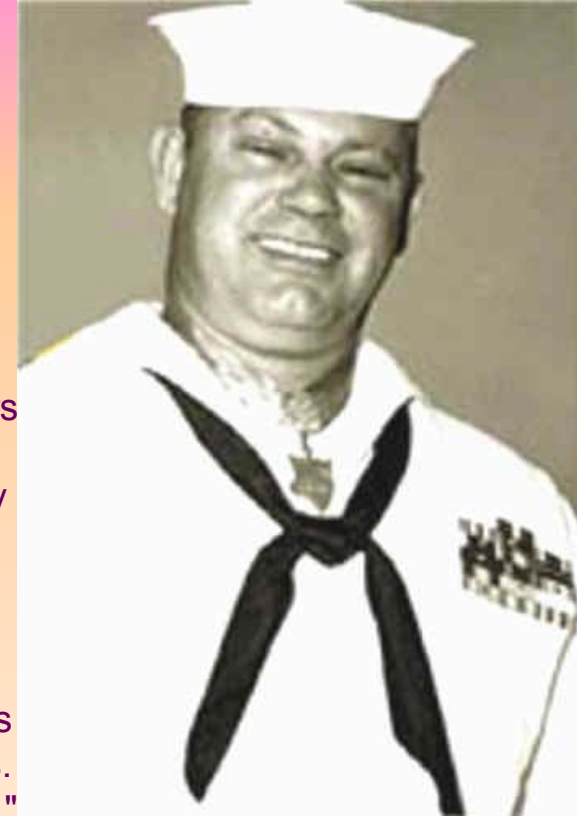


## *Most Decorated Sailor Belonged to The **NSW** Community*

The Navy's most decorated living Sailor, Boatswain's Mate Chief James E. Williams, passed away Oct. 13, 1999 in Florence, South Carolina. His remains were laid to rest in Florence National Cemetery in Florence, S.C. on Saturday, Oct. 16. He was 68 years old.

Williams joined the Navy at age 16 and received many awards, including the Congressional Medal of Honor, which was presented to him by then-president Lyndon B. Johnson in a ceremony at the Pentagon. Williams earned so many awards during his distinguished career that he became known as the Navy's "most decorated enlisted man." Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jay L. Johnson spoke about Williams with fond memories. "Boats' Williams was a true American hero and a great Navy man," said Adm. Johnson. "I am lucky to have known him and call him my friend. We are forever grateful for his service to our Nation. We will miss him."

Williams retired from the Navy in 1967 and returned to South Carolina where he found another way to serve his country. In 1969, he was appointed U.S. Marshal for the District of South Carolina. Although his exploits in Vietnam were legendary, he was quick to admonish anyone who wanted to talk about his awards. "You gotta stop and think about your shipmates," he said in an interview with the Navy's All Hands magazine in 1998. "That's what makes you a great person and a great leader - taking care of each other." Williams' many awards include three Purple Hearts, three Bronze Stars, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, two Silver Stars, the Navy Cross, and the Congressional Medal of Honor. The next slide contains his MOH citation.





# Vietnam

WILLIAMS, JAMES E. (*Cherokee*)

Rank and organization: Boatswain's Mate First Class (PO1c.), **U.S. Navy**, River Section 531, My Tho, RVN, Place and date: Mekong River, Republic of Vietnam, 31 October 1966. Entered service at: Columbia, S.C. Born: 13 June 1930, Rock Hill, S.C. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. PO1c. Williams was serving as Boat Captain and Patrol Officer aboard River Patrol Boat (PBR) 105 accompanied by another patrol boat when the patrol was suddenly taken under fire by 2 enemy sampans. PO1c. Williams immediately ordered the fire returned, killing the crew of 1 enemy boat and causing the other sampan to take refuge in a nearby river inlet. Pursuing the fleeing sampan, the U.S. patrol encountered a heavy volume of small-arms fire from enemy forces, at close range, occupying well-concealed positions along the river bank. Maneuvering through this fire, the patrol confronted a numerically superior enemy force aboard 2 enemy junks and 8 sampans augmented by heavy automatic weapons fire from ashore. In the savage battle that ensued, PO1c. Williams, with utter disregard for his safety exposed himself to the withering hail of enemy fire to direct counter-fire and inspire the actions of his patrol. Recognizing the overwhelming strength of the enemy force, PO1c. Williams deployed his patrol to await the arrival of armed helicopters. In the course of his movement he discovered an even larger concentration of enemy boats.



Not waiting for the arrival of the armed helicopters, he displayed great initiative and boldly led the patrol through the intense enemy fire and damaged or destroyed 50 enemy sampans and 7 junks. This phase of the action completed, and with the arrival of the armed helicopters, PO1c. Williams directed the attack on the remaining enemy force. Now virtually dark, and although PO1c. Williams was aware that his boats would become even better targets, he ordered the patrol boats' search lights turned on to better illuminate the area and moved the patrol perilously close to shore to press the attack. Despite a waning supply of ammunition the patrol successfully engaged the enemy ashore and completed the rout of the enemy force. Under the leadership of PO 1 c. Williams, who demonstrated unusual professional skill and indomitable courage throughout the 3 hour battle, the patrol accounted for the destruction or loss of 65 enemy boats and inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy personnel. His extraordinary heroism and exemplary fighting spirit in the face of grave risks inspired the efforts of his men to defeat a larger enemy force, and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

# Vietnam

THORNTON, MICHAEL EDWIN (*Cherokee*)

Rank and organization: Petty Officer, **U.S. Navy** (SEAL)

Navy Advisory Group. Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, 31 October 1972. Entered service at: Spartanburg, S.C. Born: 23 March 1949, Greenville, S.C. Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while participating in a daring operation against enemy forces. PO Thornton, as Assistant U.S. Navy Advisor, along with a U.S. Navy lieutenant serving as Senior Advisor, accompanied a 3-man Vietnamese Navy SEAL patrol on an intelligence gathering and prisoner capture operation against an enemy-occupied naval river base. Launched from a Vietnamese Navy junk in a rubber boat, the patrol reached land and was continuing on foot toward its objective when it suddenly came under heavy fire from a numerically superior force. The patrol called in naval gunfire support and then engaged the enemy in a fierce firefight, accounting for many enemy casualties before moving back to the waterline to prevent encirclement. Upon learning that the Senior Advisor had been hit by enemy fire and was believed to be dead, PO Thornton returned through a hail of fire to the lieutenant's last position; quickly disposed of 2 enemy soldiers about to overrun the position, and succeeded in removing the seriously wounded and unconscious Senior Naval Advisor to the water's edge. He then inflated the lieutenant's lifejacket and towed him seaward for approximately 2 hours until picked up by support craft. By his extraordinary courage and perseverance, PO Thornton was directly responsible for saving the life of his superior officer and enabling the safe extraction of all patrol members, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.



# *Other Native American MOH Recipients*

## *Indian Campaigns 1869-1890    World War II*

Blanquet, Indian Scout  
Chiquito, Indian Scout  
Co-rux-te-chod-ish, Sergeant  
Elsatsoosu, Sergeant  
Factor, Pompey, Private  
Jim, Sergeant  
Kelsay, Indian Scout  
Kosoha, Indian Scout  
Machol, Private  
Nannasaddie, Indian Scout  
Nantaje, Indian Scout  
Paine, Adam, Private  
Payne, Isaac, Trumpeter  
Rowdy, Sergeant  
Ward, John, Sergeant

Apache  
Apache  
Pawnee  
Apache  
Apache  
Apache  
Apache  
Apache  
Apache  
Seminole  
Seminole  
Apache  
Seminole

Reese, John N., Private First Class Winnebago

## *Korean War*

George, Charles, Private First Class Cherokee



# The *Code* Talkers



Just as in World War I, the skills of the Choctaw were employed for coded radio transmissions. Comanche (Army) and Navajo (Marine Corps) Code Talkers were used on both fronts as well. As was true in World War I, these native languages did not include words for many modern war machines and military terms, forcing the Code Talkers to become inventive. Over 400 new “words” were created. A submarine, for example, was called Beesh too, (iron fish) by the Navajo Code Talkers, and the Comanche Code Talkers used posah-tai-vo (crazy white man) when speaking of Adolf Hitler.

The Comanche Code Talkers of the Army’s Fourth Signal Division provided crucial, secure communications in the European theater. Their skills were employed all through the D-Day invasion, the liberation of Paris and the Battle of the Bulge. For added security, transmissions were first encrypted in English and then translated into Comanche. For example, a message about troop movement, location, time, and casualties might be encoded in English as, “we’re on second with two outs in the bottom of the fifth.” This would then be translated into Comanche. Thus, if intercepted and translated from Comanche to English (or German), the message would still have no apparent significance. Like the Choctaw Code Talkers, the Comanche warriors were also honored by the French in 1989 with the Chevalier de l’Ordre National du Merit.

The Navajo Code Talkers proved particularly important in the South Pacific and were used extensively throughout that theater, including the battlefields of Iwo Jima, Guam, Peleliu, Okinawa, Saipan, Tarawa, and Guadalcanal. Indeed, as one Marine Corps signal officer noted, “Were it not for the Navajo Code Talkers, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima and other places.” As with the Comanche transmissions, the Navajo code was “double-encrypted” by first encoding an English message, then translating it to Navajo. The complex Navajo code was never broken by the Japanese. In fact, the code was so elaborate that when Joe Kieyoomia (a Navajo who was not a Code Talker) was captured by the Japanese. He was unable to decipher intercepted American transmissions, despite the fact that his captors “encouraged” him by torturing him for five months and beating him nearly to death.

# *Native Americans in Today's Navy\**

**Officers 308**

**Enlisted 4,684**

***NSW***

**Officers 3**

**Enlisted 31**

*\*Active Duty*